

Annual Report 2020



Lesvos Solidarity

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Foreword from our Board

This year brought a lot of changes to the environment in which we work. The pandemic, the political context, as well as the destruction of Moria camp were all challenges that we took on, and we tried each time to prove that there was a possibility to adapt and support needs of the refugees and the local society at the same time. These events have given us one more opportunity to witness in action the huge network of solidarity that exists on the island and in Europe. We have been humbled by the trust and care that so many supporters have shown us all over the year, especially when all our efforts went to saving Pikpa.

For LeSol, this has also been a year of growth, with new projects, and new members joining the team, bringing new spirit and creativity to our operations.

The loss of Pikpa still requires mourning for some of us, but as with every change this year, it has been an opportunity to reflect on the past and make new plans for the future. We are starting 2021 with a new structure, new projects and ambitions, and we hope that all our supporters will be with us to continue this journey.

Efi Latsoudi and Quentin
Brzustowski



Violence and repression amidst a global pandemic

2020 was an extremely challenging year in Lesvos. The first months of 2020 were dominated by unseen and extreme violent attacks against refugees, NGO workers, journalists and anybody perceived as standing in solidarity with refugees. Efi Latsoudi, co-founder of Lesvos Solidarity, launched and won a court case against two people for posting online threats on social media.

Considerable organizational capacity had to go into dealing with the burdensome NGO registration procedure and inspections carried out by various inspection bodies throughout 2020, placing a heavy pressure and administrative burden on the organisation. These actions by the authorities must be seen in the context of a general crackdown on civil society actors working on migration, combined with the promotion of a toxic narrative and fake news, intended to harm the credibility and the legitimate work done by these actors. As Lesvos Solidarity we have responded with legal actions, as well as with advocacy actions in coordination with other civil society actors.

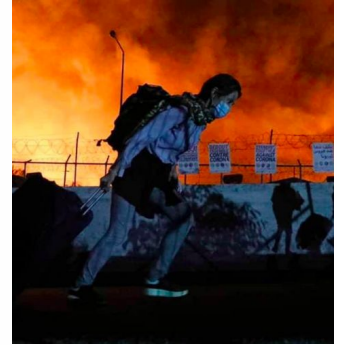
Taking advantage of the increase in online engagement and events in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lesvos Solidarity organized and took part in various online events to put a spotlight on the situation in Lesvos, especially with COVID-19 and violence and repression on the rise. This has been crucial given the fact that media attention for the situation in Lesvos was very low in the first half of 2020, given the global pandemic. This changed in September, in the aftermath of the Moria fires.

Responding to the pandemic, we also adapted our operations in all of our projects, to ensure the protection of the vulnerable population that was present in these spaces. Additionally, we supported the local healthcare system by facilitating donations of thousands of masks, gloves, and a brand new respirator to the hospital of Mytilini. Even after the end of the lockdown in Lesvos, as our team and residents in Pikpa took upon themselves to maintain strict standards, thanks to which we did not have a single case of COVID-19 in the camp.



A match in the powder barrel

In the aftermath of the Moria fires on 8 and 9 September, Lesvos Solidarity together with Choose Love/Help Refugees, Europe Must Act, Still I Rise, Legal Centre Lesvos and Refugee Rights Europe launched a grassroots initiative to galvanise public support and to bring together an unseen coalition of organisations, groups, networks and politicians across Europe for real, radical change after the fires. A **petition** was launched and promoted on the *change.org* platform, which gathered over 180.000 signatures and was co-signed by over 450 organisations, movements and politicians across Europe. The platform was used as mobilization tool in the weeks following the events, calling on people to take part in social media actions to keep the pressure high on decision makers, including EU targets following the announcement of the EU Migration Pact and their statements that there would be “No More Morias”. Apart from public actions, member states and EU decision makers received our advocacy calls through coordinated advocacy actions.



In the field, the residents of Pikpa started cooking over 300 meals daily to be distributed to the ones who had been forced to flee and stay on the road. Our team organised with them distributions of food, clothes and hygiene products for 2 weeks. At the same time, we opened new spaces in Pikpa to host single mothers and pregnant women, who had been left without any support after the fires. We had already received the first 2 families when the announcement of the closure of Pikpa came out, and we were forced to stop accepting cases, to avoid the risk of them being brought to Pikpa and then evicted shortly after. We continue this support outside Pikpa in 2021, offering decent shelter and services for women with children in Mytilene.

Despite huge mobilisation and advocacy efforts across Europe, the Greek authorities and European Union are persisting in their harmful and violent migration policies, geared towards deterrence. Advocacy efforts continue to denounce Moria 2.0 and the plans to build a new camp in Lesvos, as part of the implementation of the new EU Migration Pact.



Pikpa Camp: Families Program

Pikpa was an independent, open, and community-based solidarity camp in Mytilini, based on the principles of solidarity, empowerment and active participation.

In 2012, a grassroots voluntary solidarity network called 'the village of all together' requested from the municipality of Mytilini the use of an abandoned holiday camp, to host homeless people and refugees. Since then, Pikpa camp provided shelter to over 30.000 refugees, and acted as Mytilini safety valve in times of emergency.

Once more this year, as over 1000 unaccompanied minors lived in the olive groves of Moria, Lesvos Solidarity in collaboration with Unicef initiated a shelter in Pikpa for some of the most vulnerable children: girls up to 17 and boys under 12. A few months later, as the infamous camp of Moria was burned and thousands of refugees and asylum seekers were forced to flee to the road, Pikpa started hosting pregnant women and single mothers.

For 8 years, Pikpa has set an example of how a community based shelter can provide dignity and empowerment to those on the move.



Demographics

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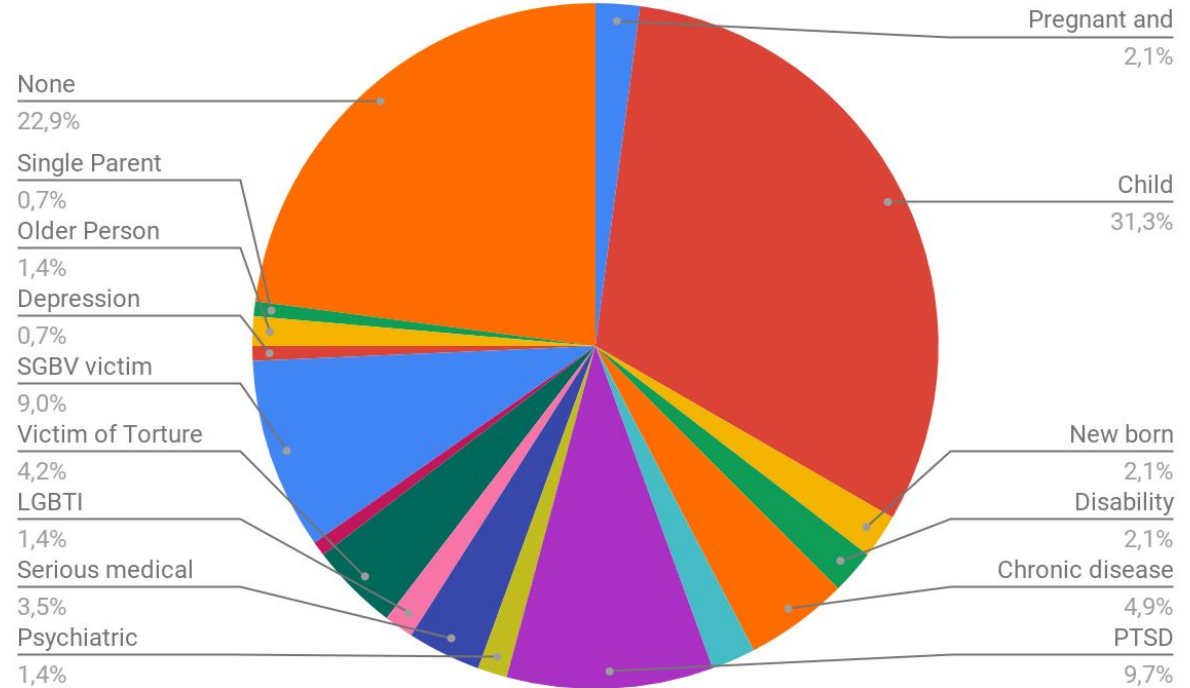
Individuals found shelter in Pikpa this year as part of the "families program"

79

Of which were women

50

Of which were under 18 years old

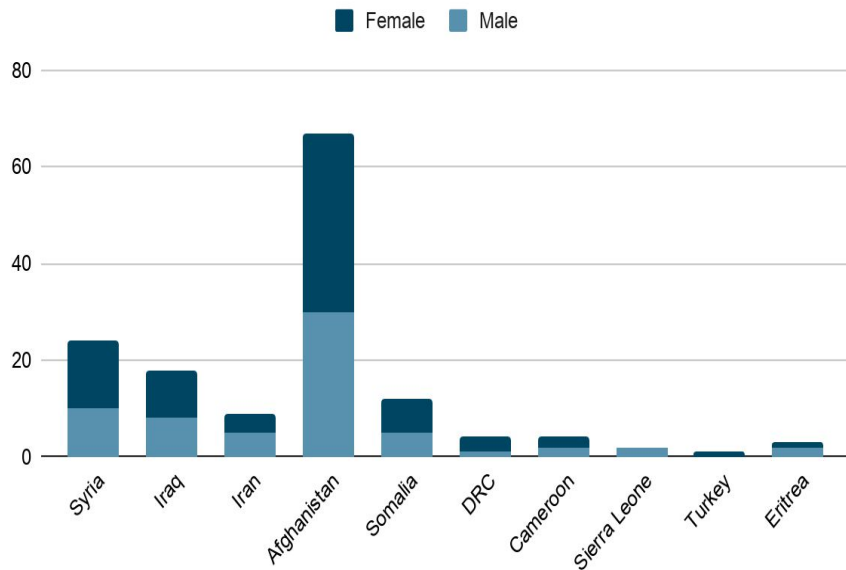


Vulnerabilities of Pikpa residents

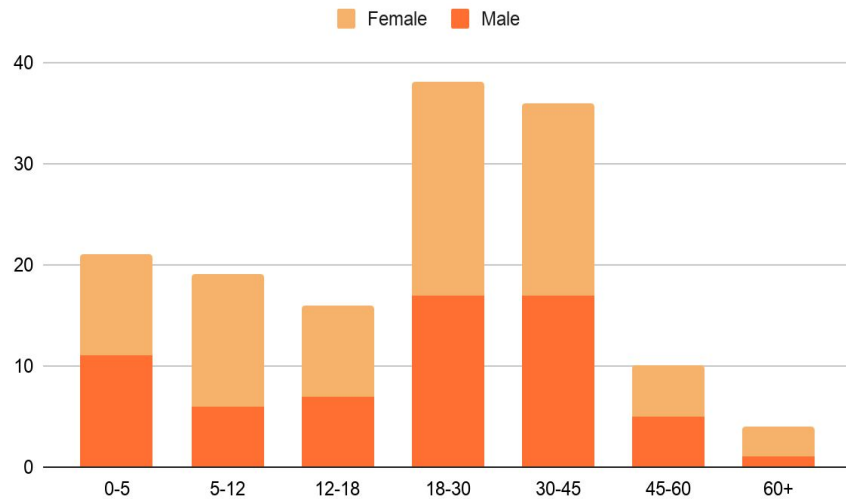
Demographics



Country of Origin



Age Groups



Life in Pikpa



Community

All residents of Pikpa are involved in expressing and discussing concerns and news that affect the camp. A lot of effort is being put for each one to feel safe and included in the community

Diversity

Our team focuses on ensuring the respect of cultural diversity within the community and the inclusion of all in the activities and life of the camp

Dignity

Treating people with respect and considering them as individuals, offering time to listen to their needs and wishes, but also their advice. This is what makes Pikpa a community that goes beyond catering for basic needs.

Active participation

By keeping all members of the community involved in the use of the spaces and maintenance of the camp, we empower the strong dimensions of each one's identity and fight a feeling of abandonment and helplessness. It is also strengthening bonds between members to care for each other and for their shared home

Camp sustainability

Construction

Improvements to the camp are made by our volunteers and residents together. This year, we built :

- One new tent for storage
- 7 rooms renovated for unaccompanied minors
- One new tent for unaccompanied minors common space
- 4 new isoboxes for toilets and showers to face the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2 emergency rooms for pregnant women and single mothers after the fires in Moria
- New floors in 3 houses

Housing

Our housing team is ensuring that all houses are comfortably furnished and maintained, and organizing distribution and replacement of homeware and cookware when needed.

This year, we installed 26 air conditioning units in every house and offices of the camp, to improve the comfort of our residents and replace electric heaters and fans that are more hazardous and energy costly.



Camp sustainability

Food Distribution



We provide food boxes to all residents of Pikpa 3 times per week. For unaccompanied minors, ready meals were provided by Zaporeak and Nan restaurant. Food boxes include flour, oil, rice, pasta, beans, local seasonal vegetables and meat once per week. We also pay attention to specific dietary needs of all residents and provide extras accordingly.

This year again, over **3500** individual food boxes were distributed to the residents of Pikpa.



After the fires in Moria, together with the residents of Pikpa, we started cooking 300 portions daily to be distributed to the people who were staying on the road.

NFIs and clothes

Every week, our Pikpa kiosk is open to distribute hygiene items, diapers, as well as chlorine and cleaning products. One of our residents is also organizing the laundry program. Each house has access once a week to laundry service to wash their clothes.



Our clothes shop is open on appointments, for residents of the camp to get new clothes. It is also a space for residents to socialize and have a good time trying on new fashion styles.



Medical Support

On site nursing

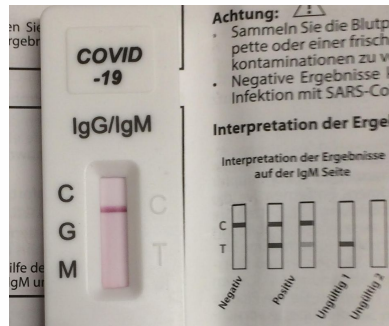
Some of the residents of Pikpa have special medical needs that require regular care. Our nurses provide a follow up to each one of them and ensure the provision of medication, as well as they take care of all minor injuries and illnesses



Health promotion

Our medical team provided training to the staff, volunteers and residents of the camp on hygiene and COVID-19 related issues, and participated in adapting the rules and activities of the camp to reduce the risks of contamination.

Additionally, our nurse provided information to parents and children on a variety of topics, such as infant care, safe sex or vaccinations.



Appointments

Our medical team follows up on medical needs and arranges appointments to the hospital and private specialists on the island. In total 77 medical appointments were made this year for our residents

Support to the hospital

For years we have collaborated closely with the public health services in Mytilini. Our medical team acts as a focal point to offer support to the hospital or receive referrals of individuals with increased medical needs.

During the pandemic, we facilitated the donation of a foetal monitor and a respirator to the hospital, as well as masks and gloves.

Casework and administrative support



Referrals / transfers

Our caseworker is the contact point for transfers in and out of the camp.

Together with our social worker, they are conducting the introduction process for newcomers to get to know the space and services provided, and to handle the communication with other actors for departures.

Asylum

The asylum procedure is one of the primary concerns of our residents.

We maintain the communication with legal organisations in Lesvos to answer questions and make sure that all residents are prepared for interviews and represented when needed

Public services

We ensure the access of all beneficiaries of Pikpa to their rights, including UNHCR cash assistance, the issuance of tax numbers, social security numbers, and access to unemployment services

"Our reception is open every day to support residents of the camp with their administrative and legal needs. We focus on supporting individuals gain independence by providing information guiding them through the asylum and public system, especially when it comes to claiming their rights to a fair asylum process and legal representation, cash assistance, social security or employment."

Psychosocial support



165 Individual sessions held by our psychologist

29 group sessions with over 327 participants. Including parents groups, threat and crisis management, diversity awareness, coaching sessions for empowerment and access to job market, children empowerment, and 2 sessions to process the eviction of Pikpa

3 training sessions for our staff and volunteers on trauma informed intervention and activities

11 individuals referred to private psychiatrists, with at least 2 follow up sessions for each

40 interventions-first aid psychological support (panic attacks, disconnection episodes, conflict resolution, protection issues) in collaboration with social worker/case worker/ medical team

"Our work in Pikpa focuses on empowerment, resilience, and integration of the residents of the camp into society. We aim to provide individuals with tools to confront their personal and mental health difficulties, empower the strong dimensions of their identity, reignite their hope and help them activate themselves as part of a community where they feel safe and included."

Children activities

With over 40 % of Pikpa's population being under 18, it is our priority to provide educational and leisure activities for children and teenagers. Offering regular activities and informal education to children of the camp also gives a chance for parents to have time on their own, and to help children and parents adapt to a routine that resembles public schools.

This year, with the closure of the schools during the lockdown, as well as the start of our unaccompanied minors project, our schedule for informal education and language classes was also reinforced.



Public schools

In September, we successfully registered 24 children in public schools in Mytilini. Our psychosocial team was the focal point for communication with the schools in order to carry out a successful integration and facilitate the liaison between parents and teachers

Forest School

Since 2017, Pikpa has been hosting the pedagogical project Mikros dounias. Local children and children of the camp, aged 2 to 5, meet every day in nature, to play and learn together. In this context, our youngest residents soon learn the language, whilst parents both from the camp and the outside have opportunities to meet and exchange.

Kindergarten

For children over 5 years old who do not yet attend school, our volunteer lead the kindergarten, where we offer daily activities and games, language classes and informal education. Our psychosocial team was overseeing the activities program and following up on the children's behavior and organising meetings with the parents.

On site activities

Our volunteers and visitors organised various activities for residents of the camp: We had the visit of clowns, we painted the common areas of the camp, we had a treasure hunt, and often went to the sea for a dive

Activities and Events

We had a reduced activities program to avoid the spread of COVID-19, but when possible, we organised camp activities:

- * Football
- * Yoga and self defence
- * Crossfit
- * Carpentry workshop
- * Women's empowerment groups
- * Crafts with humade and decoration of the camp
- * Language and music classes
- * Sewing workshop
- * Painting of the camp for the Save Pikpa campaign
- * A musical performance by the Cantalaloun choir, with great symbolic impact in protesting against the eviction



Closure of Pikpa camp

On September 23rd, minister of Migration Notis Mitarakis announced the closure of Pikpa camp before the end of October. It was an utterly unfair decision, especially whilst the new camp near Kara Tepe was being built and the need for alternative accommodation for vulnerable people was greater than ever. This date marked the start of our SAVE DIGNITY – SAVE PIKPA campaign. We immediately mobilised all our energies, resources and our committed network to organise our strategy to challenge this decision. We reached out to the authorities and politicians at the local, regional, national and EU level. We collaborated with legal actors RSA and GCR to engage legal measures at the European Court of Human Rights to protect our residents. We mobilised through our Save Dignity – Save Pikpa Facebook group, we trended on Twitter with our #savepikpa twitterstorm, we organised a press conference, we talked to local, national and international media every day. The whole Pikpa community joined in to paint the camp, and we printed t-shirts. We looked into every creative way to campaign against this decision. At the same time, we were going through the stress together with the residents of the camp, sharing their fears and hopes, making strategies and discussing future options, to maintain the feeling of community we had been building over the years. They knew all about the living conditions in the new camp and could not understand why they were asked to leave a place where they finally felt safe. This time of resistance has been extremely difficult for all the community, but we received a lot of empowering support, and we really want to thank all of our supporters from our hearts.

On October 30th, a massive Police operation took place to evict Pikpa camp. Riot police and police forces, accompanied by the Public Prosecutor, arrived at 6:30 in the morning in order to move the residents to the “old” Kara Tepe camp and evacuate the place.

Our team has been meeting with each resident after the events to support them going through this process and assessing new needs they have. Our psychosocial team has been facilitating group empowerment sessions, giving people an opportunity to share their experience and frustrations. We have continued providing them with medical, psychosocial and case support, and ensuring a smooth handover to the organisations operating in Kara Tepe. Based on the needs expressed, we have organised distributions of NFIs, blankets and household goods that the residents needed, and supported those who could not find private accommodation. In the meantime, we have gathered all our belongings for future projects or emergencies and doing all the necessary amendments in order to leave the premises in a seamless condition.



“Pikpa, you are a beautiful butterfly and now the time has come for you to fly! So fly near and far, to every country, to every place in the world and so everybody that you were, you are, and you will always be alive” M.L.



Progress

This year has seen immense progress in Pikpa, with the addition of two new washing units and new camp rules on hygiene, the opening of new rooms for 35 unaccompanied minors and for single mothers after the fires in Moria.

In the summer (before the fires in Moria), we made a new evacuation plan for Pikpa and we organized evacuation exercise with all residents.

The team has also grown a lot this year, bringing fruitful collaborations and relationships, together with a new structure.

Our work on community building has enabled us to go through this year's events, protecting the health and wellbeing of our residents, and maintaining strong relationships in difficult times.



Challenges

The main challenge this year has come from the burden that the authorities have put on NGOs, and especially on Pikpa. We had to adapt to new regulations for our registration to the ministry, faced a series of inspection by the transparency agency, forestry and urban planning authorities, and finally fought against the eviction of the camp, calling on our network, launching legal actions and campaigns, and accompanying the residents with the stress of losing their homes.

The global COVID-19 pandemic has also been a real challenge for the community of Pikpa, as the legal and administrative procedures were frozen for some time, and all the activities reduced in the camp. Maintaining the wellbeing of our residents in this context has required extreme attention.



Ambitions

As the government enforced the closure of Pikpa camp, and seeing the complete absence of alternatives offered to asylum seekers on the island, as well as the dreadful conditions in which the inhabitants of the new camp in Mavrovouni are accommodated, we believe that the idea of Pikpa, and its spirit will live on. We will continue to fight for dignified shelter, and to share our story to show that there were and still are other ways to welcome refugees in Lesvos and elsewhere, and to create safe and beautiful spaces both for locals and refugees. The closure of shelters all around Greece, including the camp of Kara Tepe where all Pikpa residents were transferred, is forcing individuals to live in the streets, amongst which many vulnerable.

Pikpa Unaccompanied Minors Shelter



Because of the increasing need for safe spaces for unaccompanied minors, in 2019 Lesvos Solidarity was approached by Unicef to open a shelter in Pikpa to host this population. In march, whilst having to deal with a pandemic, a team of 3 started the recruitment of new personnel, the design of the activities and operations, organised the separation of tasks and the redaction of all the job descriptions, organised the space and the supplies. At the same time, the existing staff of Pikpa took care of preparing the camp's residents to welcome that change and these new special members of the community.



7 rooms were renovated in the main building of Pikpa, and a team was formed, with 12 caregivers, 2 interpreters, 1 lawyer, 1 psychologist, 1 social worker, 1 nurse, 1 coordinator and 1 education specialist. Attention was given to building a team with a variety of backgrounds and skills, who could all bring their own personality to this project. On April 15th, LeSol started providing 24/7 care and support to the minors.

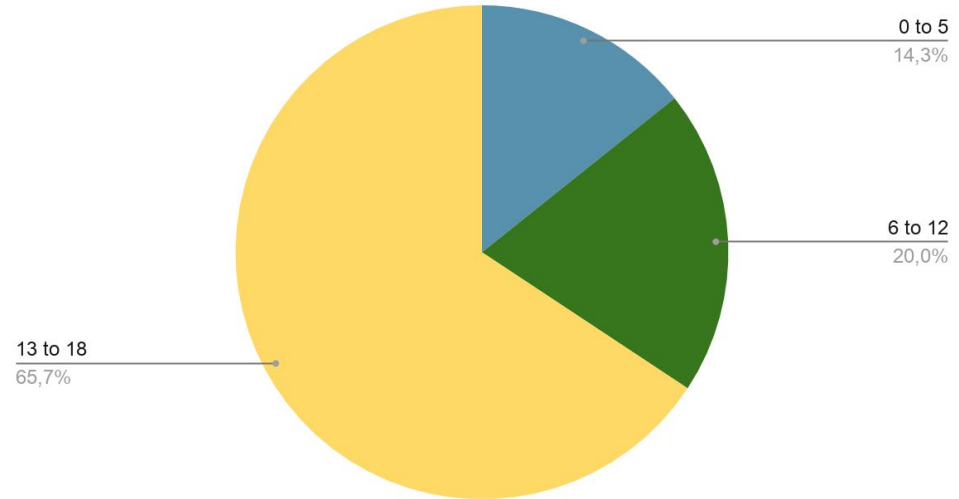
Demographics

Target population of the project was agreed upon by the team and the public prosecutor: boys until 12 years old, girls until 17 years old.

Pikpa camp was ideal for the youth, and minors who are about to turn 18, because shelters usually ask individuals to leave when it happens. In plkpa, however, due to the existing family program, it would have been possible to support young people after they turn 18, since they are already part of the community.

In total, **7** boys and **28** girls were hosted in Pikpa as part of the UAM program

Age groups

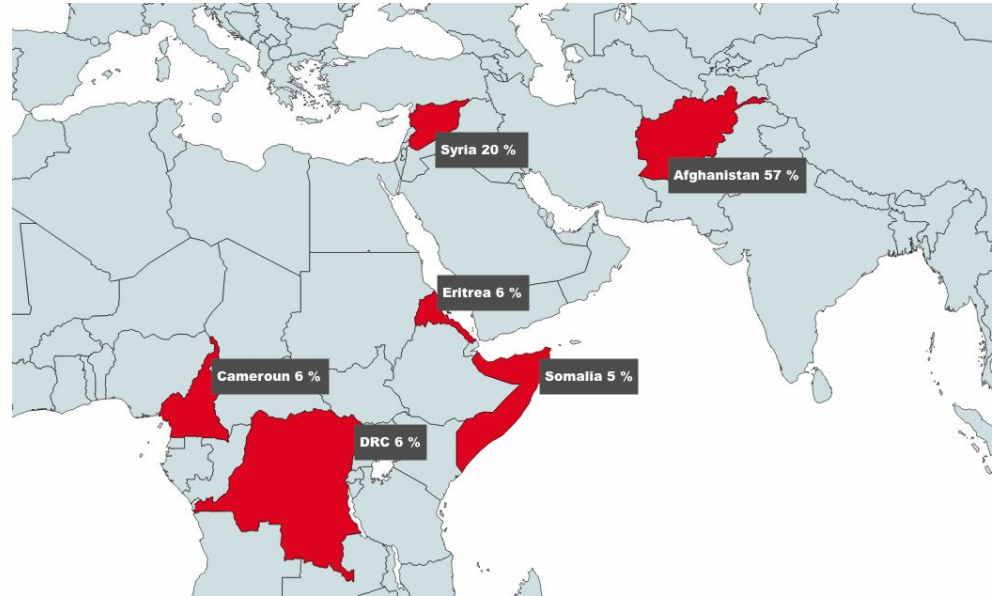


Demographics

The shelter also offered support to teenage single mothers. The focus was put on empowering them to take care of their newborns.

Because there are only few shelter for such cases, we received girls from outside Lesvos, and even the mainland, who were transferred to Pikpa.

We also offered emergency shelter after the fires in Moria camp, for children who had been separated from their caregivers in the chaos



Countries of Origin of the minors

Daily Life



The minors hosted in Pikpa were encouraged to wake up and go to bed at regular hours, and to take part in group activities, as well as cleaning and decorating their space.. 3 meals per day were provided in the common space dedicated to them, as well as fruits between breakfast and lunch, and smoothies and healthy snacks before dinner. The children could also enjoy treats and soft drinks on special occasions.

Educational and leisure activities were conducted during the day, and on evenings. Children over 14 were allowed to leave the camp unaccompanied from 8:00 until 20:00, as well as some minors under 14 upon individual assessment of their life skills.

Every room was also given a weekly slot for laundry.

Once per week, a group meeting with all the minors and the staff was organised, where the minors were included in decision making about their daily life. It was a space to share needs and concerns, build on their identity and rights as children.

Regular movie nights, shared meals and parties were also organised, together with other children of the camp.

Each one of the minors was monitored individually by the caregivers in collaboration with the psychologist, social worker and lawyer to follow up on their behavior and adaptation to the new environment.

Education

The shelter's operation also had education as a primary concern, with the support to minors to access public schools, but also empowerment through informal education.

- Individual assessments were conducted with each one of the minors about their educational background, needs and interest.
- Education groups and creative activities were designed and conducted based on these assessments and skills of the staff. The priority was put on language courses in collaboration with Mosaik Support Center, as it was a key need for all of them in order to navigate society and develop independence.
- During lockdown, classes and activities inside the camp were reinforced, to keep the minors engaged with their education. When movement restrictions were lifted, most classes and activities were conducted in Mosaik to provide a different setting than the camp, where the children lived, getting them used to using public buses, and arrive at "school" on time. Mosaik is also a safe social space, where they could meet other people, or engage in new activities.
- We were in contact with the coordinators of refugee children education since the beginning of our operation, to investigate the possibilities of inclusion of the minors in the public formal education system. The first applications were accepted in June, for the school year 2020-2021. Available places were limited in secondary education in Mytilene, so everyone aged above 13 could not be registered. The team had to prioritize some minors based on predictions of the outcome of their cases (eg. family reunifications). Unfortunately the right to access formal public education is yet to be guaranteed for all children.
- The minors could give feedback about their involvement and satisfaction in all offered educational and recreational activities during the weekly house meeting. This meeting was also an opportunity to develop other skills, communicate in a group and make common decisions, listen to others and debate

Education

Greek language

4-5 minors participated regularly. Classes were taking place in Pikpa during lockdown and in Mosaik afterwards

Human and natural sciences

Introduction to the history of the planet and human evolution, as well as history of science
Trip to the natural history museum of Lesvos Petrified forest



Creative Drama workshop

Enjoying time together as a group, expressing thoughts and feelings through creative ways with english and/or non verbal communications. Laughter and tears. Building trust.

Homework/Study Support

Afternoon study support based on the program of reception classes of public secondary schools: English, greek, mathematics and informatics. Children enrolled in schools would attend those extra classes, together with the ones who could not be registered.

English Language

Mixed level classes first with 12-13 minors, then groups by level. About 12-13 students in the groups.

Informatics

11 regular participants first in Pikpa and in mosaik after lockdown. Basic skills for the use of computers

Activities

Movie nights

On thursdays, the shelter would gather with snacks and soft drinks to watch a movie in the common space with the other children of the camp,

Arts and crafts

The caregivers joined by our humade team organized regularly creative activities. The minors who wanted could join and express themselves, draw, paint and learn all sorts of crafts



Sports

Physical education was an important part of the minors' weekly schedule. It is a fantastic way to build relationships, fight boredom and depression. Our program included: Yoga, self defense, forest games, zumba, and swimming

Gardening

Pikpa is full of green spaces. The shelter had also its small garden, where the minors planted seeds and herbs, took care of them and could learn about plants and herbs



Cooking

The minors of the shelter have requested to cook dishes from their home countries, so we organized on friday nights a moment for each room to cook and have a meal all together

Guitar

Some of our caregivers and cultural mediators had musical skills and taught guitar to the children who were interested

Activities

Other activities were organised for the minors of the shelter:

- Dance parties for occasions, birthdays. The minors would participate in preparing the party, making cakes and a playlist with songs they liked and invited other residents of the camp
- Support of the Pikpa football team during their games on Saturdays
- Beauty salon and clothes bazaar

We also took the minors on several excursions on the island:

- Day in Sigrì : Visit of the natural history museum, picnic and swimming
- Concert: "Before the full moon: Springtime - Resistance - Hope, songs and stories that represent us" by the intercultural adult choir "CANTAlaloun" at Mytilene Castle
- Farewell lunch party at Nan restaurant in Mytilini with all the minors and members of the team

The children also participated to the support of people who were forced to flee Moria after the fires. They helped preparing hygiene kits and packing non food items. They were hugely enthusiastic to give a hand in this moment of stress

During the Save Pikpa campaign, the minors joined forces with the whole camp to paint Pikpa and write banners with messages of hope and resistance.



Legal Support

Our team provided on site legal support for all the cases of the minors. Our lawyer has been collecting sometimes missing information or conducted extra assessments to support cases, and coordinated DNA test needed for family reunification procedure with the relatives of the minors who stayed in other countries.

The lawyer was also providing information to the rest of the team to understand the behaviour of children, and provide them special attention in moments of frustrations, often due to long delays in cases.

Finally, our lawyer took care of providing legal representation of the minors for incidents that could have legal implications.



We conducted information sessions for the minors staying in Greece about their rights and the procedure they would undergo after they turn 18.

A seminar on gender based violence and human rights was also conducted twice by our lawyer, during which the minors brought many questions.

Of the 35 minors that were hosted:

- **12** received positive decisions for family reunification in europe, **5** are still waiting for their decision
- **8** were settled in european countries under the relocation program
- **10** minors were going through an asylum procedure in greece and waiting for their interviews to be conducted.

Medical Support

As for the “family” program in Pikpa, onsite medical care was provided to the minors of the shelter, allowing us to host unaccompanied children with specific need, such as young mothers with their infants. When taking medication, the nurse together with the caregivers would make sure that each minor was following their treatment



Prevention

Our nurse took care of arranging COVID-19 tests for all the minors prior to their transfers and to make a plan in case of a covid outbreak in the camp and develop a protocol for quarantine. The new rooms being all equipped with their own bathroom, it was easier for residents of the shelter to quarantine than it was for the rest of the camp.

Vaccinations

Registering in public schools in Greece requires the vaccination of the children. For both the minors of the shelter and other children of the camp, our medical team, in collaboration with EODY organised the vaccination campaign.

Education

Educating the minors on health and hygiene questions was another task for our nurse. We had seminars on STD and sexual education, COVID-19 information sessions and precaution, workshops on personal hygiene, and dedicated course for young mothers on breastfeeding and how to start the infant's first solid meals



Progress

The shelter started from scratch this year, and has been a huge success for the time it was operating. A whole new team was created, as well as all the rules, guidelines and operating procedures for the shelter. We received 35 minors in the shelter, and managed to accompany them in their growth as well as their cases. We have achieved a high level of trust and mutual respect with the children, whilst building on their skills to communicate and manage their emotions.

We reinforced the activities program inside the camp for both the minors and the families and successfully protected all residents against any outbreak of COVID-19



Challenges

It is always challenging to support minors in such situations. We faced sudden outbreaks of fear or stress or anger, as well as children running away.

Special focus went into facilitating the children's inclusion in the shelter and the broader Pikpa community, and overcome their difficulties to co-exist with others.

We had discussions with each minor about their safety and freedom. It was especially difficult for the minors to accept the restrictions of movement due to COVID-19, and their inability to have visitors or visit their friends in Moria.

After the Moria fires, the minors feared for their friends there, who they could sometimes not reach in the chaos. They also had to cope with the loss of their previous "home".

Before the eviction of Pikpa, minors were unwilling to face the new reality, and uncertainty as to where and when they would move. The stress was shared by the rest of the camp and the workers, which made it extremely difficult for everyone to provide effective support

Safe Passage Bags Workshop



The **Safe Passage Bags workshop** was created in the summer of 2015 and has since developed as one of the key projects of Lesbos Solidarity for integration and education. It is an upcycling project where bags are being created by refugees and locals living on the island. The bags are created with the lifejackets and dinghy boats left on the shorelines of Lesbos, once used by refugees while crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey. They are a symbol of the unsafe passage that millions of refugees are forced to undertake as a result of inhumane European border policies. The bags turn something with a heavy story into a symbol of hope. Rather than leaving the used life jackets and dinghies buried in a landfill, we wanted to give them a new meaning, and offer an opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees to develop skills, earn an income, and start a new life.

The **Safe Passage Bags workshop** is therefore the legacy of the refugees to society. Each bag carries with it the history of a forced travel, and each bag is a visible reminder of the situation the current violence at our borders leads to, worn by the people who care.



Products

With the decrease of arrivals this year, it has become harder to find lifejackets to use for our products. Through a collaborative process, our tailors have designed several new bags using material from dinghy boats.

We have also used more recycled clothes and discarded tents, which is a more easily available material that tells another part of the story of the people who make it to the shores of Lesbos.

With the rubber from dinghy boats, our new products are waterproof and generally much more durable, but require more work to be made.



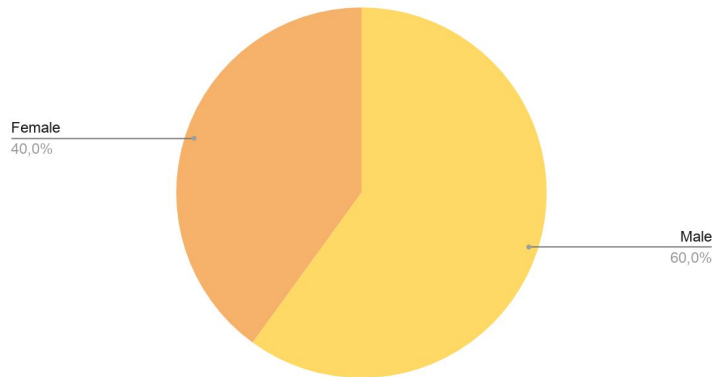
Beneficiaries

We employed 10 refugees and asylum seekers this year in our workshop!

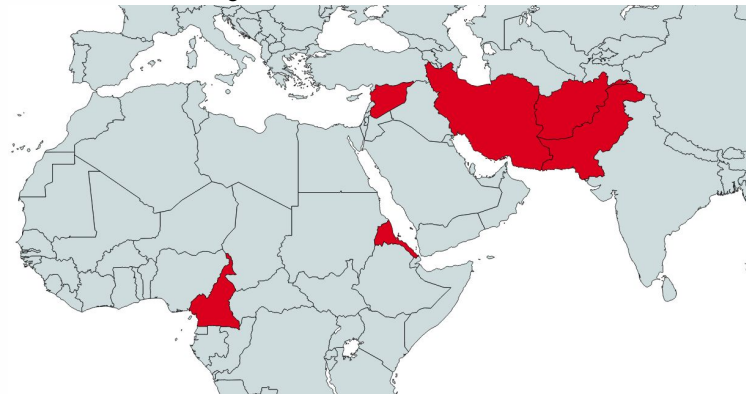
This job is offering them an opportunity to develop skills, earn an income, and build a sense of normality for their lives on the island. When asked, they often say that they take pride in seeing their creations being sold or seeing people wearing the bags they made.

Employees of the workshop are also attending Greek or English classes in Mosaik, and take part in team meetings and assemblies with the rest of the staff of Lesbos Solidarity. Support is also provided to them to handle their asylum cases or other administrative needs.

Gender representation



Countries of Origin



Production

415 life jackets
73.5 kg of clothes
149 kg of dinghies

Wallet	2076
Small pencil	1020
Pencil case	1250
Passport	0
Banana	80
Traveller	482
Two bottles	20
Moon	417
Shopping bag	571
Notebook	360
Backpack	369
Cube	0
Vanity bag	195
Necessaire	453
Belt pouch	156
Hip bag	212
Tote bag	45
Backpack dinghy	40
TOTAL	7746

Wallet	1636
Small pencil	1077
Pencil case	1669
Passport	50
Banana	120
Traveller	512
Two bottles	45
Moon	437
Shopping bag	600
Notebook	359
Backpack	368
Cube	0
Vanity bag	190
Necessaire	461
Belt pouch	138
Hip bag	233
Tote bag	44
Backpack dinghy	41
TOTAL	7980

Cutters



Tailors



Events

Our Safe Passage Workshop was represented in several events this year, where we presented our work and/or sold bags. Unfortunately, many of the events that were planned had to be cancelled.

- Νύχτα Ιδεών «Ζήω – ζώ» | Μυτιλήνη (Night of the ideas) hosted by the French Institute of Athens (January)
- Winter fair, the big Cambridge Calais sleepout (February)
- Eco & Fair Herzele, Belgium (March)
- Digital participation in Raise Your Voice Festival 2020. Organized by Fashion Revolution Greece (April)
- Our workshop produced hundreds of masks that we distributed to MSF, the hospital of Mytilini, residents of Píkpa, and the local population (April)
- We had a stand in Aeriko (social cultural space) in Cyprus (August)
- Participation in “REdesign Fashion Thematic Exhibition” in Kalavassos, Cyprus (September)
- Participation in the Handmade Fest in Pula, Croatia through UdrugaPank (October)





Progress

Through our collaboration with AMB and Higgs, our team followed a training and established a business plan for this year.

Our tailors designed a completely new collection of products made of dinghy boat material.

We successfully adapted our workshop space to COVID-19 regulations and could continue our production whilst guaranteeing the safety of our workers.

With the help of our colleagues and volunteers, we improved our communication, sharing more often our ideas and introducing our team members. We also added new settings to our e-shop to keep up with online sales during lockdown.



Challenges

It has become increasingly rare to find lifejackets on the shores of Lesvos this year, and we had to find new materials that could be upcycled into bags. Thanks to the creativity of our team, we found ways to use old clothes, dinghy boats, as well as discarded and broken tents from the camps..

The pandemic has changed the way we work, with the necessity to find additional space for our machines, changes in labour regulations, but also because customers could no longer visit the shop and see our work.

There were less visitors and tourists generally on the island, which has affected our sales as well.



Ambitions

Due to the changes in policies for asylum seekers on the island, and the closure of alternative structures for accommodation, our focus has shifted to opening as many job opportunities as possible, and work with the employees in the workshop on building their independence.

In 2021, we will try to employ more people and include individual support to their schedule and reinforced trainings and language classes. This way, we hope to allow more individuals to find their own means out of the camps, and build the skills that they will need to move on with their lives.

Mosaik Support Center



Mosaik began in 2016 with the aim to offer refugees and migrants a sustainable perspective on life while being on the island of Lesbos. We wanted to give constructive meaning to an otherwise harrowing and seemingly arbitrary experience of waiting, attrition and discouragement. By learning a language or a craft, producing art or joining creative projects, or simply by sharing a space that is safe and supportive, refugees and migrants could regain some semblance of normality, empowerment and often, fun.

Mosaik Support Center is open to asylum seekers and refugees living in camps, private apartments, or other shelters on Lesbos. Furthermore, we support people whose asylum procedures have already been completed and who have decided to stay on Lesbos, as well as members of the island's local community.

All classes are made up of mixed nationalities in order to discourage segregation within the migrant population itself and to encourage exchange between migrant and non-migrant populations. Thus, the Support Center facilitates multiple levels of integration. Given the extent of our experience in solidarity work with refugees and migrants on Lesbos, we are in a position to help connect them with local organizations that can facilitate their integration into the local environment and offer them further support in their attempt to recover their basic human rights, empowerment and autonomy.



Education

This year we had **462 registrations** for English, Greek and Informatics lessons. Unfortunately, the classes were abruptly halted in March, due to the lockdown. We kept trying to provide people living in the camps with a way to spend their time meaningfully. Teaching online was not easy: it is often difficult to stick to schedule because of circumstances in the camp, lack of access to internet connection, the need for students to copy the material sent to them into notebooks, and that's aside from the difficulties communicating over small screens and with a lot of background noise. But most of the students are very motivated, and the commitment to their homework shows an admirable determination to learn.

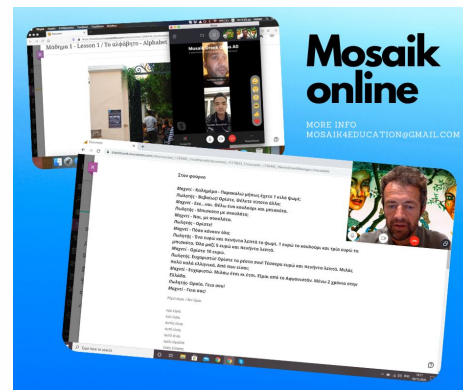
Our team made changes in the classrooms to start classes again after the lockdown. With masks and physical distancing, and reducing the number of students in each class, it was made possible once more to allow students in, but as the restriction on Moria camp continued throughout the summer, many could not attend classes.



When the fires broke out in Moria, a lot of people lost their phones, and were not able to participate in any activities, due to the general chaos during the events and the establishment of the new camp. When the lockdown started once more in November, our team was ready for online teaching, but the difficulties of the students had not been solved.

Some of our students who have already received asylum and sometimes found a place to live in town, now need to find their way to build a life in Greece. It is often easier for them to establish a routine for classes. We can lend them laptops, so they are able to use more teaching-friendly technology, such as Zoom or Blackboard. For the first time, it was also possible for students to continue their lessons with Mosaik after leaving the island.

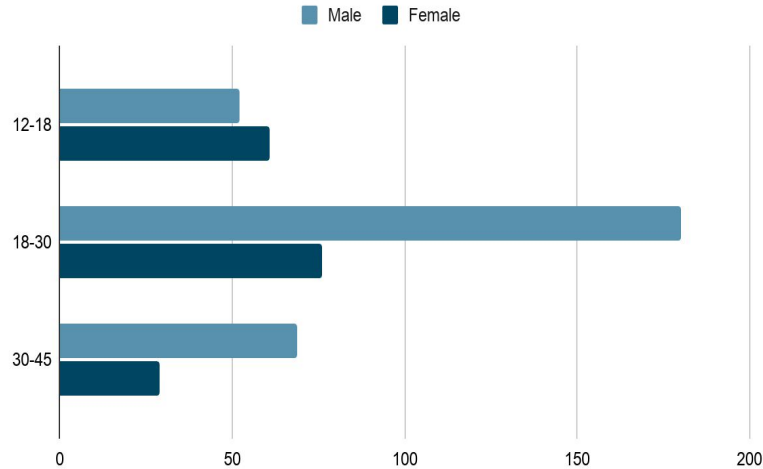
In total, **250 students** could attend lessons with Mosaik this year.



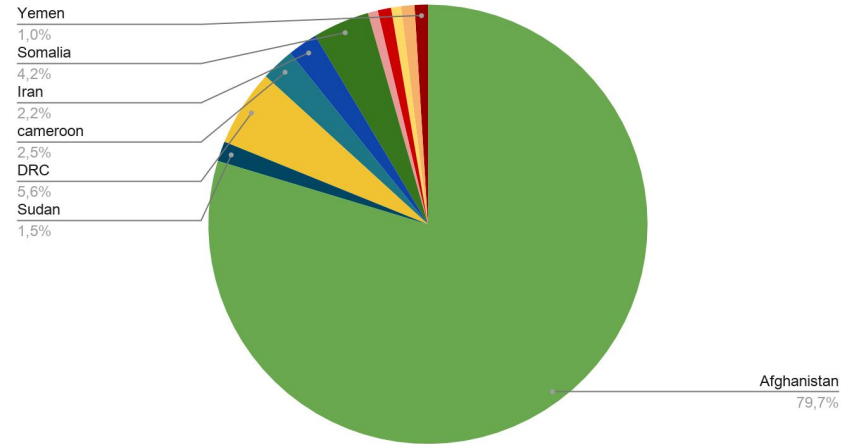
Demographics

During our registration period, we received applicants from 23 different countries!

Age groups and gender



Country of Origin



Language Classes

English

Our English language program is split into 3 different levels: Alphabetisation, English for beginners, and Advanced. The classes often consist of groups who share a common language, to make it easier for students to support each other. Two separate groups for minors, beginners and advanced, were also created.

173 students attended English language classes in Mosaik this year, and approximately **20** online.

Greek

Our Greek language program is also available for beginners and advanced level students.

This year, **120** students attended Greek classes in Mosaik. After March, classes were conducted via Whatsapp and Blackboard, which about **40** students could attend. Our teachers also taught the minors and adult residents of Pikpa, and some of our employees during the summer.



Computer and IT Classes

40 people graduated from our computer classes this year.

After lockdown, most students did not have access to a computer, or did not have the minimum tools to follow online classes, so only a few could continue the curriculum.

We offered classes for 3 different levels. The full program aimed to offer a basic understanding of computers, as well as result in the creation of a CV / portfolio for personal and professional development. The three levels included:

- Basic computer skills, user interface, handling files and folders, effective typing, use of email, online search, and an understanding of virtual “dangers”
- Google drive and Office pack: how to use Word, Excel and Powerpoint, creation of a professional CV
- Introduction to programming.



Events

The year started normally, with our first registration period, in which over 400 people came to sign up for classes. As usual it was a hectic time, but also a beautiful gathering of students from all over the world, a lot of new encounters and laughter.

On February 16th, we hosted an art exhibition by refugees,, with canvas and t-shirts painted by students of the Wave of Hope art school. The night also included a fashion show with traditional Afghan costumes, as well as a bazar and live music performance.



Mosaik has a library with books in many different languages. During the first lockdown, to overcome boredom, we opened our library for individuals to pick up books in their language that they could read whilst staying at home.

We started a collaboration with the University of Aegean, University of Salento, University of Granada and the NGOs Asociación Solidaria Andaluza de Desarrollo and Arci Lecce Societa. The aim of this project is to create a postgraduate Master's degree to promote the social inclusion of migrants, and to develop educational materials that help to mitigate the discourse of emerging hatred, favouring social integration of this group and eliminating prejudices.

Due to the pandemic, we were not able to organise any more events in the space of Mosaik, but started organizing watch parties and discussions on Facebook. Every week, a short film or video is broadcast live on our facebook channel, and people can join online.





Progress

Our team was joined this year by a fundraiser and new IT teachers, and later in the year by a new coordinator.

After the first lockdown, our teachers prepared a plan for online education, investigating various platforms that could be used.

We organized after school sessions for the unaccompanied minors who were attending public schools. The support was built on the program of the so-called integration classes, and aimed at supporting these children with their first steps into the public school system.



Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of schools all around Greece in March and again in November. In the summer, there were also restrictions on the number of students that could attend classes at Mosaik, as well as restrictions of movement for all residents of Moria camp. We managed to stay in touch with some of our students and start classes online, but overall were only able to reach a reduced number of students this year. One of the main challenges we faced is the lack of access to internet connection in the camps. Beyond education, Mosaik always was a safe place where people could rest, socialize and engage in activities. We have tried to keep this spirit online by organizing our weekly watch parties.



Ambitions

We want to expand the activities of Mosaik. We hope to host events and allow people in again, whilst sticking to safety measures and open the center also on evenings and on weekends. We also want to offer opportunities for other people to bring in ideas for the use of the space, explore new possibilities for integration.

With the evolution of the pandemic, and the construction of a new camp in Lesvos, we want to adapt and aim to create a new program of classes and activities, with a holistic approach and the involvement of the communities. We strive to make a program that answers more accurately to the needs of our students.

Finally, we are working on creating new job opportunities for refugees in non-traditional refugee positions.

Humade Crafts workshop



Humade
LESVOS MOSAIK CRAFTS
REFUGEE INTEGRATION WORKSHOPS

The **Humade Crafts workshop** was established in June 2017 and is combining artistic creation, education, vocational trainings and social inclusion. Having as a starting line respect for the environment and natural resources, various methods of recycling and re-use of materials are being explored. The project aims at sensitizing people on environmental issues and the issue of garbage production, as well as human rights and integration.



Our activities and workshops help individuals develop their creativity and ingenuity by recycling waste materials, often seen as useless, and transforming them into beautiful works of art, jewellery and other crafts. Humade is also collaborating closely with the Safe Passage Workshop on the preparation of material for the bags and bowls, and painting old clothes to produce wallets.

The workshop is also an open and safe space where individuals with creative ideas or needs can come to find material and tools to achieve their own projects. For some, it is a great opportunity to spend time and socialize in this inspiring workshop. For others, it was also a space for social actions and activism, where they could prepare banners and material for demonstrations.

This year, Humade workshop also developed activities outside Mosaik, and reached public schools, where murals were created to bring attention to waste.

Workshops



Self-empowerment workshop with African refugees, creation of an image of their life using the patchwork technique



Women empowerment through art in collaboration with the psychologist of Pikpa



Lampshades with locals. The lampshades were made of dry calabash with pieces of broken glass inserted



Weaving techniques with recycled fabric, using a traditional loom. This technique is traditional in both Greece and the Middle East. The loom itself was made from an old window.



Outreach with schools

This year, our artistic activities reached the public schools of Lesbos. We aim to use art to open discussions with the youth about waste, recycling, and the environment, and to talk about the situation of refugees on the island and educate young children to human rights and diversity.

We believe that these questions need to be addressed for the new generations, who are soon to be citizens of this island, and who are often informed only through their families and mainstream media channels. Using art as a catalyst for the discussion is also giving a new perspective on these topics.



Mural at the 4th High School of Mytilini, made of old fabric, in collaboration with students and refugees



Mural at the High School of Plomari, made of broken glass and tiles

Some students of the 2nd chance school visited our workshop in Mosaik and made crafts



Products

Thanks to the creative input of all the people who participated in our workshops and activities this year, we created a new set of jewellery. Each item is unique and all are produced in small quantity depending on the desires of the participants.

We are always searching for ways to use new kinds waste material. Our new products are made of paper, old clothes, old video tapes, dinghy boats, old tent fabric, as well as printed fabrics. The earrings are made of silver.

We sell these products in the shop and online to support our project, and buy tools or materials that we cannot find in the trash..



Events

The Humade team was invited to various events and workshops this year, to exchange ideas and techniques, and speak about the situation in Lesbos. Although many events were cancelled, here are a few highlights of our participations:



Workshop in Toumba Eco Farm: We made crafts with locals, and created lampshades and mosaics out of waste and natural material



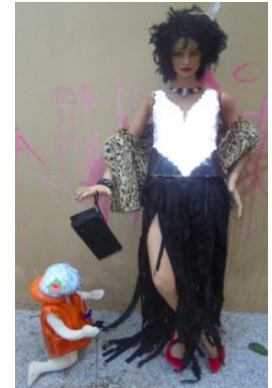
Workshop in Skoros in Athens: we presented our work and made some craft using scrap fabric with citizens and refugees who had previously been at the workshop in Lesbos. A "swap" market was also organized.



We were invited to join an Erasmus upcycling event in Valencia, where a mural was collaboratively created with European students at youth center Benimaclet.



We joined the festival "Raise Your Voice", and created a costume made of waste material with the workshop's participants. The costume aims to address the topics of human trafficking and slavery, as well as climate change.





Progress

This year, our workshop created a network called Το Θέλεις; (do you want it?), for people in Lesvos to donate, exchange, and recycle products, such as furniture and clothes.

We developed new collaborations with public schools, and managed to organize activities at these schools which involved refugees as well. Generally, we have seen a better involvement of the local community in various activities of the workshop.

We also developed new international collaborations, and had the opportunity to present our work elsewhere in Europe, and discover projects that we can connect with.

We launched our Youtube channel with tips to recycle material and make crafts at home during lockdown. In some cases, during the first lockdown, we also provided individuals with material.



Challenges

Because of the success of our outreach this year, our workshop is currently understaffed. We need more employees to be able to run the workshops, whilst doing activities in schools or in other cities, attend festivals, and develop our collaborations with universities.

The Covid-19 pandemic has limited our ability to attend events that we had planned this year, as well as making it impossible for individuals to attend. The restrictions of movement imposed on people living in the camps that continued throughout the summer also made it difficult for individuals to join our workshop on a regular basis. Finally, due to the situation, our sales were impacted as well.



Ambitions

This year, we want to focus our recycling efforts on old clothes. For 5 years, donations have arrived in huge quantities on the island, and for people in Moria it is almost easier to find new (used) clothes than to wash their old ones. Because this material is available in immense quantities in the trash, we are aiming to create a new sustainable production using this material, and create new job opportunities.

Continuing with the work we put into building connections with schools, we would like to organize new activities and continue to educate young children on environmental and social issues.

We also aim to develop our network of recycling in Lesvos, with more participants, more recycled products, as well as new links between the citizens of this island.



Finances and administration

Expenses

	Expenses*		Salaries**		
	cost	%	Field Personnel	Admin Personnel	%
PIKPA FAMILIES	174.546€	47.7%	196.608€	0€	28.9%
PIKPA UAM	88.093€	24%	196.700€	0€	28.9%
MOSAİK	37.588€	10.3%	98.832€	0€	14.5%
SAFE PASSAGE	19.663€	5.4%	103.849€	0€	15.2%
HUMADE	531€	0.15%	15.984€	0€	2.4%
ADMINISTRATION	43.944€	12%	0€	68.443€	10%
OTHER PROJECTS	1.958€	0.5%	0€	0€	0%
TOTAL	366.323€		680.416€		

*All the provided figures are estimates based on available data

** The provided figures include social security and other employers' costs

This table sums up our expenses for each one of our project. The expenses for our Pikpa families program include expenses for the whole camp, such as emptying of the septic tank, as well as the deconstruction of Pikpa in november.

In total, **70** people were employed by Lesvos Solidarity this year !

It is an important part of our work, as a local organisation, not only to provide services, but also to create job opportunities, as well as dignified working conditions.

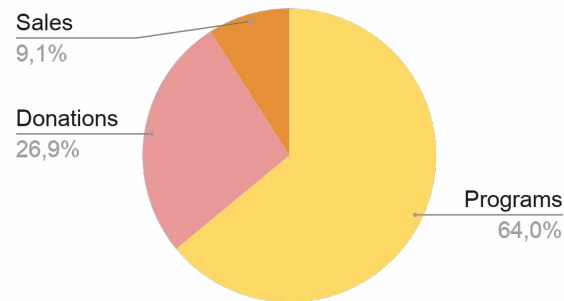
Thanks to our long time efforts to bring sustainability into our work, and due to the events of this year, our budget has doubled in 2020 compared to 2019.

Income

Programs from NGOs and foundations*	969.604 €
Donations from private donors*	408.045 €
Sales**	137.034 €

*All the provided figures are estimates based on available data

** VAT is included



For the first time this year, our bags workshop had a positive balance at the end of the year. We will use this indication to expand our team there and create new job opportunities.

We had new and ambitious projects this year, that aimed at offering safe spaces and support to vulnerable individuals, and at showing alternative ways to answer to the developing situation in Lesvos.

With the succession of events that lead to the destruction of Moria camp, the island was once more in the spotlight and we saw a great increase in donations after september. Due to the closure of Pikpa, some of our operations had to be put on hold, but we are keeping all our supporters informed and involved, as we redirect their contributions towards our next projects.

Restructuring LeSol

The governance of Lesvos Solidarity reflects our principles of equality and justice, and we also work hard internally to develop and implement inclusion and democratic mechanisms that we would like to see in the broader society.

We use a non-hierarchical structure for decision making, where all employees are equally involved in the expression of ideas and opinions, as well as deliberation and decision making. We also try to promote care and understanding amongst colleagues, as well as to offer to each employee responsibility and capacity to act. We strive for an organisation guided by pathways and codes of conducts, that everybody agreed upon, rather than the will of a few.

After the closure of PIKPA, and with the desire to pursue our mission and engagements, we started a long and difficult process to identify how we could best support both the long-term needs of Lesvos Island as well as new and urgent threats posed by an increasingly hostile government and the fallout of the global pandemic. We have begun to design new projects, expand operations and assign new roles for those who were operating in PIKPA.

It is a challenging but exciting time, heralding a new chapter for Lesvos Solidarity that keeps our history and the PIKPA spirit at the heart of our future planning.

Contact us



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Lesvos Solidarity-PikpaLesvos
Solidarity-Safe Passage Bags
Lesvos Solidarity-Mosaik Support Center
Lesvos Solidarity-Humade

Thank you!



Our work was only made possible with the support we got this year from so many individuals and organisations, who donated, volunteered, visited us, spoke about our work around them, joined our campaigns and social media channels or collaborated with us.

A huge thank you to:

ActionAid, Agora, Aktion Partnerschaft Dritte Welt e.V., Amnesty International, Area Metropolitana de Barcelona, Attika Human Support, Babel Day Centre, Barbara Maier and her family, Bellevue di Monaco EG, CANTAlaloun Choir, Christian Peacemakers Team, City of Backnang, CVJM Ludwigsburg, Deutsche Mennonitische Friedenskomitee, Deutsche Schule Athen, Diakonie Hessen, Donate4Refugees, Eine Welt Gruppe Dinslaken, EPIM, MIGRIMAGE, Evangelische Kirche in Hessen und Nassau, Evangelische Kirchenkreisverband Berlin Mitte-Nord, Evangelische Kirchenkreisverband Eberswalde, Evangelischen Kirchenkreis Hagen, Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen, Evangelische Kirche von Kurhessen-Waldeck, Flüchtlingsinitiative Lohmar-Siegburg, Frontline Defenders, FundAction, George Tyrikos-Ergas & Katerina Efsthathiou- Selacha, Gjengen i Ryggen, GLS Treuhand, Guido Fluri Stiftung, Heimatstern, Help Refugees, HIAS Greece, Higgs, Hotel Votsala and 'Dafnis and Chloe', Institut français de Grèce, International Rescue Committee, Kalimera e.V., Kallisti, Kathrin Berg Mueller, Kindernothilfe, Kulturfabrik Bochum, LDS Charities, Lesbosfonds, Médecins Sans Frontières, Metochi Study Center, Mikros Dounias, Moms Without Borders, NAN Restaurant, Nintendo of Europe GmbH, No Borders Kitchen, Nobel Peace Center, Noomi Rapace, Odysseas, Open Society Foundations, Otto Per Mille, Oxfam, Paul Grüniger Stiftung, Polyphonica Aegean, PPLG, Presbyterian Church U.S.A., Prism the Gift Fund, ProemAID, Queen Mary University of London, Refugee Law Clinic Cologne, Refugee Support Aegean, SAO Bashira Center, Schauspielhaus Zürich, Sea of Solidarity, ShowerPower Stichting, StarFish Foundation, Stichting Junglebirds, Stiftung ProAsyl, Stiftungsfonds Zivile Seenotrettung, Syrian Cultural Organisation (SEKU), Terre Des Hommes, The Lipman-Miliband Trust, Theater GegenStand e.V., UNICEF, Universitetet i Agder, WomenInSolidarityHouse Lesbos, Zentrum Oekumene, and so many more ...